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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KAWC](#) [LI](#) [SL](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: (C/NF) LIBERIA/SIERRA LEONE: UK CONSIDERING
TAKING CHARLES TAYLOR

Classified By: PolMinCouns Maura Connelly; reason 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C/NF) FCO West Africa Section Head Jason Moore told Poloff under questioning June 12 that HMG is considering UN Secretary General Annan's request that it agree to

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incarcerate former Liberian president Charles Taylor if he is convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). Moore said HMG has concluded that Sweden and Denmark will definitely not take Taylor, and that FCO is willing but the Home Office is more cautious. Primary legislation would have to be enacted in order to permit the UK to incarcerate Taylor; existing legislation authorizes the incarceration of persons convicted by courts set up by the United Nations (e.g., the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda), but the SCSL is a "hybrid" court.

¶2. (C/NF) Moore cited questions that need to be addressed if the UK is to agree to take Taylor, such as whether Taylor's family would have visitation rights and whether Taylor himself would have right of abode upon completion of his sentence. He explicitly dismissed Britain's colonial past in Sierra Leone as a factor in HMG's deliberations.

¶3. (C/NF) Moore was not sure how long it might take for HMG to reach a decision, particularly given that Home Secretary John Reid is swamped with embarrassing revelations about the functioning of the Home Office. (NOTE: Reid himself has said his vast, multi-faceted department is "not fit for purpose" at present. END NOTE.)

¶4. (C/NF) Aware that Annan had also approached the USG, Moore asked how the USG intended to respond. Poloff said he had no guidance on this, and offered no encouragement.

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